AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An image decoding apparatus for performing a decoding process under a prescribed coding method, comprising:

~~decoding means for performing~~ a decoder configured to perform the decoding process on picture data encoded with the coding method; and

a control ~~means for controlling~~ unit configured to control the ~~decoding means, wherein, in a fast playback mode, said control means controls said decoding means by selectively performing~~ decoder based on types of a mode signal received by the control unit such that the decoder:

performs a first process as part of the decoding process to extract and decode an I-picture and ~~following~~ prescribed pieces of P-pictures based on a location ~~basis~~ of the I-picture ~~locating at a desired position~~ in the picture data[[,]] when the received mode signal is of a first type;

performs a second process as part of the decoding process to decode ~~only spatial prediction~~ a macroblock in the picture data based on a prediction ~~method~~ signal obtained through reversible encoding[[,]] when the received mode signal is of a second type; and

performs a third process to decode as part of the decoding process [[only]] direct current components of transformation coefficients with transformation coding~~, or a fourth process that is a combination of the second and third processes~~ when the received mode signal is of a third type.

2. (Currently Amended) The image decoding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the I-picture and the P-pictures are in a simple playback frame, and the[[said]] control unit controls ~~said decoding means so as~~ the decoder to decode the I-picture and ~~each of~~ the P-pictures ~~composing the simple playback frames~~ in order[[,]] without decoding a part of the picture data included after the simple playback ~~frames, in a case where~~ frame when the first type ~~the fast playback mode~~ is fast forward playback~~, and controls said decoding means so as to find a part before the simple playback frames, sequentially decode the I-picture and each of the P-pictures composing the simple playback frames, and output the simple playback frames in a reverse order of a decoding order, in a case where the fast playback mode is fast backward playback~~.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) An image decoding method for performing a decoding process under a prescribed coding method, the image decoding method being executed by a decoder and comprising:

detecting types of a mode signal used to control the image decoding method performed by the decoder;

~~wherein, in a fast playback mode,~~ performing, by using the decoder, a first process to extract and decode an I-picture and ~~following~~ prescribed pieces of P-pictures based on a location ~~basis~~ of the I-picture ~~locating at a desired position~~ in picture data encoded with the coding method[[,]] when the mode signal is detected to be of a first type;

performing, by using the decoder, a second process to decode ~~only spatial prediction~~ a macroblock in the picture data based on a prediction ~~method~~ signal obtained through reversible encoding[[,]] when the mode signal is detected be of a second type; and

performing a third process to decode [[only]] direct current components of transformation coefficients with transformation coding~~, or a fourth process that is a combination of the second and third processes is selectively performed~~ when the mode signal is detected to be of a third type.

5. (Currently Amended) The image decoding method according to claim 4, wherein the I-picture and the P-pictures are in a simple playback frame, and ~~: in a case where the fast playback mode is fast forward playback,~~ the I-picture and ~~each of~~ the P-pictures ~~composing the simple playback frames~~ are decoded in order[[,]] without decoding a part of the picture data included after the simple playback ~~frames~~ frame when the first type is a fast forward playback~~; and in a case where the fast playback mode is fast backward playback, a part before the simple playback frames is found, the I-picture and each of the P-pictures composing the simple playback frames are decoded in order, and the simple playback frames are decoded in a reverse order of a decoding order~~.

6. (Canceled).

7. (New) The image decoding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the I-picture and the P-pictures are in a simple playback frame, and when the first type is a fast backward playback the control unit controls the decoder to:

find a part before the simple playback frame;

sequentially decode the I-picture and the P-pictures in the simple playback frame; and

output the simple playback frame in a reverse order of a decoding order.

8. (New) The image decoding method according to claim 4, wherein the I-picture and the P-pictures are in a simple playback frame, and when the first type is a fast backward playback the image decoding method further comprises:

finding a part before the simple playback frame;

decoding, sequentially, the I-picture and the P-pictures in the simple playback frame; and

outputting the simple playback frame in a reverse order of a decoding order.

9. (New) The image decoding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the decoder performs a fourth process as part of the decoding process when the received mode signal is of a fourth type, the fourth process being a combination of the second and third processes.

10. (New) The image decoding method according to claim 4 further comprising performing a fourth process when the mode signal is detected to be of a fourth type, the fourth process being a combination of the second and third processes.